

I. Status of the Claims

Claim 11 has been added.

Claim 1 has been cancelled without prejudice.

Claims 2, 4, 5, and 7-11 are pending in the application.

The amendments to claims 2, 4, 5, and 7-10 and new claim 11 do not add new matter.

II. Status of the Specification

The Abstract of the Disclosure stands objected to because it exceeded 150 words. Accordingly, the original Abstract has been deleted in favor of the Abstract attached hereto as page A-1. Entry of the Abstract is respectfully requested.

III. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for being indefinite for failing to particularly point out the distinctly claimed subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention.

The Applicants respectfully traverse the above rejection by stating that claims 2, 4, 5, and 7-10 have been carefully reviewed and revised to correct the informalities noted by the Examiner and to provide the proper antecedent and basis for the various terms noted by the Examiner.

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Claim 1 has been canceled and rewritten as claim 11 to correct the informalities. Thus, the Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

IV. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,743,669 to Fujita et al (hereinafter "Fujita"). The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection by stating that claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice and rewritten as claim 11. New claim 11 and amended claims 2, 4, 5 and 7-10 are not anticipated because every element of the claimed invention is not disclosed by Fujita.

Claim 11 clearly recites that the adjustable joint unit comprises a bearing seat 31 and a separate closing member 11. This is clearly illustrated in Figure 1. In opposite, Fujita only discloses a resinous bearing seat (14) to support a ball head (21). Fujita's resinous bearing seat fits into housing (12) and one end of the bearing seat is pressure crimped into a state where it then must be softened by ultrasonic vibration to form stopper portion (41) See, Fujita column 4, lines 41-52; column 6, lines 10-31 and Figure 1. The present invention discloses that the ball joint is contained in a bearing seat in the socket portion. The ball joint of the present invention is received and held by the closing member at the crimped portion of the socket and this closing member applies a preliminary load to the ball head portion. This configuration increases the stability of the ball joint and is not disclosed in the Fujita reference. Claim 4 discloses the method for producing an adjustable joint unit comprising a closing member and is not anticipated by Fujita for the above reasons. Claims 2, 5, and 7-10 define over the prior art based on their

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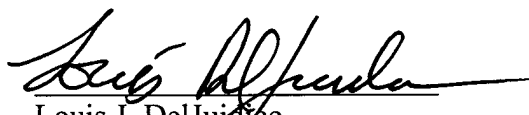
dependency from the independent claims and in view of their own further recitations. Thus, the Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are not anticipated by Fujita and withdrawal of the claim rejection, on these grounds, is requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that claims 2, 4, 5 and 7-11 are in condition for allowance and it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all pending claims be allowed and the case is passed to issue.

If there are any other issues which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,


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